

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-26. (Cancelled)

27. (New) A computerized commodity trading system comprising:
a computer network;
a first plurality of computers connected to said network;
a second plurality of computers, connected to said network for providing user access to a plurality of users to said commodity trading system via said computer network; and
a database management system including at least one storage device;
said first plurality of computers operative to communicate with said database management system and to provide the following functionality:
user management functionality operative to manage said plurality of users, groups of said plurality of users and relationships therebetween;
queue management functionality operative to manage a plurality of interrelated queues and to optimize business operation by at least one of the following functions:
batch processing to reduce workload;
amalgamating a first plurality of related shipping orders into a second plurality of related shipping orders, said second plurality of related shipping orders including fewer orders than said first plurality of related shipping orders, to reduce shipping cost; and
exploiting timing factors in scheduling to reduce costs,
said queue management functionality including:
flexible business logic defining queue behavior rules, said rules including rules for resorting, reprioritizing, collating, and amalgamating items in each of said queues, and rules for providing notification of queue information between different ones of said queues,
completion checking functionality;
queue update functionality operative to update said plurality of queues;

priority and status assignment functionality;
dependency determination functionality;
amalgamation functionality; and
sorting functionality; and

said plurality of queues including at least two of the following:
a transaction queue comprising a list of transactions, each of said

transactions including a definition of what stages need to be completed to complete said transaction and what action needs to be taken to complete each of said stages;

a storage queue comprising a list of orders that need to be stored;
a shipment queue comprising a list of orders that need to be shipped;
a currency exchange queue comprising a list of currency exchange

tasks, each of said tasks including a currency amount to be exchanged and a currency for said currency amount to be exchanged into;

a credit/debit note queue comprising a list of credit notes and debit notes; and

an invoice queue;

physical commodity transaction building functionality operative to generate at least one recommendation for a suitable transaction, responsive to a query from a user of said plurality of users;

said query including a request for a transaction recommendation meeting a set of requirements comprising a ‘buy or sell’ parameter and at least one of a first set of parameters, said first set of parameters including:

a counterparty identifier;
a product identifier;
a quantity; and
a price;

notification handling functionality;

pricing chain building functionality including the following functionalities:

a user interface functionality operative to build a pricing chain;

a pricing chain analysis functionality operative to analyze at least one pricing chain in a pricing chain library and to rank each of said at least one pricing chain relative to a specific transaction;

an update field functionality operative to update a specific field in all pricing chains in a pricing chain library;

a notification handler prompting functionality operative to prompt said notification handling functionality to obtain updates for stored price chain information; and
a sorting functionality; and

data expiration handling functionality operative to manage data expirations based on a set of data expiration parameters which include at least one expiration period; and

said notification handling functionality being operative to generate a notification in response to a request from at least one of said price chain building functionality and said data expiration handling functionality.

28. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said first plurality of computers is also operative to also provide at least one of the following functionalities:

a currency handling functionality operative to manage foreign currency exchanges;

a credit and debit note handling functionality operative to manage issuance and fulfillment of credit and debit notes;

a transaction handling functionality operative to manage communication of offers and requests;

a stock management functionality operative to track stock levels;

a contract handing functionality operative to manage and track contracts;

a product catalog functionality operative to track various products available for orders;

a shipment handling functionality operative to track shipments; and

an accounting handling functionality including a general ledger for financial accounting.

29. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said query also includes a set of weightings provided by said user.

30. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said query also includes a first set of weightings provided by said user and a second set of weightings provided by someone other than said user.

31. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 30 and wherein said physical commodity transaction building functionality includes a set of rules for determining relative importance attached to said first set of weightings and said second set of weightings.

32. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 30 and wherein said user is not aware of said second set of weightings.

33. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said query also comprises at least one of a second set of parameters, said second set of parameters including:

a present location of said product; and
a product attribute.

34. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 33 and wherein said at least one recommendation includes at least one of the parameters of said first set of parameters not included in said query.

35. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 33 and wherein said at least one recommendation includes all of the parameters of said first set of parameters not included in said query.

36. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 33 and wherein said at least one recommendation includes at least one of said first set of parameters and at least one of said second set of parameters not included in said query.

37. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 33 and wherein said at least one recommendation includes all of said first set of parameters and at least one of said second set of parameters not included in said query.

38. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 33 and wherein said at least one recommendation includes all of said first set of parameters and all of said second set of parameters not included in said query.

39. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said update field functionality is also operative to store an expiration date for said update.

40. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said notification handler prompting functionality is operative to prompt said notification handling functionality to obtain updates for stored price chain information which is about to expire or has expired.

41. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said pricing chain builder functionality is operative to build said pricing chain based on an existing pricing chain stored in the system.

42. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said set of data expiration parameters is a system-defined set of parameters.

43. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said set of data expiration parameters is a system-manager-defined set of parameters.

44. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said set of data expiration parameters is a dynamically defined set of parameters.

45. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said at least one expiration period includes a strict expiration period and an additional grace period.

46. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 45 and wherein the system is operative to automatically hold transactions based on data whose grace period has elapsed.

47. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 45 and wherein the system is operative to automatically process said transactions based on data whose grace period has elapsed when said data whose grace period has elapsed has been updated.

48. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said dependency determination functionality comprises checking dependencies of a new item submitted to said queue manager and generating new entries to the respective queues of said dependencies.

49. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said amalgamation functionality is operative to amalgamate multiple queue items into a single queue item.

50. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said queue management functionality is operative to update said plurality of queues upon receipt of a signal from a source external to said commodity trading system.

51. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said updating of said plurality of queues includes sorting functionality.

52. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said physical commodity transaction building functionality comprises potential transaction generation functionality.

53. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 52 and wherein said potential transaction generation functionality is operative to compute potential transactions based on historical data analysis, user specifications and a set of weightings.

54. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 53 and wherein said potential transaction generation functionality is also operative to compute alternative potential transactions by adjusting said set of weightings.

55. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 53 and wherein said potential transaction generation functionality also comprises trend computation functionality.

56. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 53 and wherein said potential transaction generation functionality also comprises normalization functionality.

57. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said queue manager is operative to notify said notification handling functionality when a response to said notification is received.

58. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 57 and wherein said notification handling functionality is operative to communicate with said at least one of said price chain building functionality and said data expiration handling functionality when said response to said notification is received.

59. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said transaction also comprises a life-cycle defining a time frame for completion of each of said stages.

60. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein each of said list of orders that need to be shipped comprises an amount of at least one specific product being traded.

61. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein each of said list of orders that need to be stored comprises an amount of at least one specific product being traded.

62. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said currency exchange queue is also operative to update currency exchange rates at predetermined intervals.

63. (New) A computerized commodity trading system according to claim 27 and wherein said credit notes and debit notes are processed in first in, first out (FIFO) order.